MORTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Kyle L. Kirchmeier, Sheriff

News Release
For Immediate Release
October 27, 2016
Contact: Morton County PIO (701) 426-1587 or (701) 595-3596
Pictures & Video are available at: https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BzEKNLJqG3cwdlUzdkRUelNQVm8

Authorities Continue to Clear Trespassers from Private Property and Illegal Roadblock

Mandan, N.D. – Law enforcement continue to work to remove protesters from private property and remove illegal road blocks set up by protesters on Highway 1806 and County Road 134. At around 11:15 a.m. law enforcement officers into the area to clear the property and roadways being occupied by protesters engaged in illegal activity.

Officers numerous times repeated that the protesters were "free to go". They told protesters they could not continue to trespass and they needed to clear the north camp located on private property and to vacate from the roadblocks they established on Highway 1806 and County Road 134. Protesters were instructed to walk south to the 7 Council fires camp and they would not be arrested.

As of 3:30 p.m. law enforcement officers have arrested 16 individuals. It is estimated there are about 250 protesters at the north camp and approximately 80 protesters with a dozen horses at the County Road 134 site.

During the course of moving protesters south, law enforcement officers used a long range acoustic device (LRAD) which transmits a high-pitch tone and is used by law enforcement to disperse crowds. In addition, they have had to deploy pepper spray due to protesters throwing projectiles at officers and refusing to comply with officer's orders.

Protesters set an area on fire near the bridge on County Road 134. Mandan Rural and Bismarck Rural Fire Departments both responded. In addition, protesters set tires on fire on Highway 1806.

In efforts to clear the north camp area, officers found three individuals who have used sleeping dragon devices, devices protesters use to attach themselves to objects.

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"The protesters are not being peaceful or prayerful. Law enforcement has been very methodical in moving ahead slowly as to not escalate the situation. However, the protesters are using very dangerous means to slow us down. Their aggressive tactics include using horses, fire and trying to flank us with horses and people," said Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney.

"Law enforcement was forced to go in at this time after negotiations with north camp spokesperson Mekasi Camp-Horinek of Oklahoma. I and other law enforcement leaders requested protesters to remove the barricade and have protesters vacate the private property. However, Camp-Horinek told law enforcement they "were not moving", said Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier. "Morton County has entrusted me to uphold the law and that is exactly what I intend to do. Yet I am being asked by outsiders and millionaire Hollywood actors to let agitators and rioters walk onto private property, destroy equipment, and endanger lives. And, so-called environmentalists are asking me to turn my head and allow this to happen. We have patrolled the county and enforced the law because our number one priority is public safety, separating the unlawful actors from legal protestors. This is not about the pipeline. This is not about those who wish to legally protest. This is about the rule of law."

Morton County will release more information as it becomes available.

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